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Boston Sept 8th 1837.

PHELPS MSS.

Dear Brother

I presume there is no difference of opinion between us in respect to the topics noticed in our correspondence. You mistake greatly in regard to the *fact* in the case however, if you suppose that the positions taken in the pastoral letter are "*the first rising*" of the disposition to assume rights for the clergy which are not theirs. That letter in that respect, was but the echo of the resolutions of the Gen. Ass. of *Ct.* & Mass. both, a year since. And those resolutions, which have been extensively acted on by individual ministers since, never could have passed the *general* bodies in the manner they did, if the leaven had not been at work, for some time & to a considerable extent, before, in the *subordinate* bodies. From an extensive acquaintance with the present ministry of New England I am satisfied that they have, perhaps unconsciously, lost sight of the principles of pure & correct Congregationalism, & imbibed more or less of the spirit, feelings, & views of Presbyterianism or Episcopacy. The predictions of good old Dr.

Emmons have already proved too true. And should you reply to me "at length & in such a way, as, by publication in the Spectator, to keep up the discussion", I do not know a better service you could do than to quote the opinions & predictions of the Dr. if they are in point & within your reach.

By the way, I like your suggestions in regard to having the Appeal of which I spoke to you, signed by Pastors. Indeed my plan was to do the *work* myself but get other people to *father* it. If others will do the work too, all the better. And should you reply to me as you propose, which I am anxious you should do, I think it would be better to do it without using my name. I wrote you in great haste, & do not now remember what I wrote, & should not therefore wish my letter published, at least not until I have revised it carefully.

There is no doubt that the "laity" of whom I spoke are, in many cases, "over jealous". And one reason is that while the leading influences in the great Ecclesiastical judicatories are taking ground which is at variance with the people's rights & with genuine congregationalism, those of the clergy who differ from them do not speak out against such positions. This silence gives the impression that on the whole there is but *one* feeling among the clergy on the subject. That the jealousy is extensive however, whatever the cause of it, is a fact which cannot be denied, & which should not be overlooked or disregarded. And nothing, in my view, would so effectually do it away, & in its stead, inspire the laity with such confidence in the ministry, as to have some of them, the more the better, step forth in vindication of the people's rights as well as their own. Rely upon it a generous & just defence of the people's rights would do more, infinitely more, to defend the pastor's rights, secure "their dignity of their office", & entrench them in the confidence & affection of the people than fifty — yea fifty thousand pastoral letters.

Indeed it was this belief more than any thing else that led me to take up the controversy with Messrs Fitch, Towne &c. And I do think you, & other brethren who agree with you, may do great good by spreading your views before the public at this time. There is also another reason. The effort is making at New York (in the Evangelist &c) to make the impression that Presbyterianism & Congregationalism are substantially the same thing, & that the controversy there is one which involves New England, if not as a party, yet so deeply that if old-schoolism is triumphant, New England theology (both old & new) is outlawed as heresy. The design obviously is to make New England a party in the matter, or at least a quiet spectator, so that she will not now urge her own form of government upon the attention of those other sections of the country. Of all things they deprecate just now a discussion of the comparative merits of the two forms of government. Now the truth is, believing as I do that there is no alternative in church government but the republicanism of Congregationalism on the one hand & the monarchy of Episcopacy & Catholicism on the other, I regard this as the very time, when the principles & merits of Congregationalism should be brought out & discussed. And sometimes I almost long to be hold of that N. E. Spectator that I may enter into it. I want to see good old father Hooker raised from the dead on this subject.

Paid - Chc Box 1218.

PAID

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Rev. Ellbridge G. Howe
East Marshfield
Mass.

I do not believe that friend Garrison's bold statement is true, though I doubt not he thinks it is. I have not time to explain to you the reasons of this. Suffice it to say, he has had too much occasion to form such an opinion of the "mass." I shall take the liberty of showing him that part of your letter. For he will receive rebuke. I shall be happy to see or hear from you at anytime in relation to this & any other matters

Yours truly for the slave
A. A. Phelps.